

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 HA-05 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /076 W
-----041584 271010Z /14
R 261359Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5975

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 790

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, CO

SUBJ: UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING, GENEVA,
FEBRUARY 6 - MARCH 10

REF: STATE 15786

1. IN CONVERSATION JANUARY 20 POL COUNSELOR DISCUSSED SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL WITH JOAQUIN FONSECA, FOREIGN MINISTER UNDERSECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES. FONSECA WAS PLEASED AT THE U.S. OFFER TO COOPERATE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A PRODUCTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS MEETING. HE STATED THAT COLOMBIA'S POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS WAS VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL WITH THAT OF THE U.S. AND THAT SUCH COOPERATION WOULD THEREFORE BE FRUITFUL AND MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS.

2. POL COUNSELOR THEN ASKED WHETHER THIS MEANT THAT COLOMBIA HAD ABANDONED ITS POSITION OF LINKING HUMAN RIGHTS WITH A SPECIAL TRADING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE THE U.S., A CONCEPT WHICH HAD PRODUCED AN UNFORTUNATE DIVISION OF PRO-HUMAN RIGHTS FORCES AT THE 1977 OASGA IN GRENADA. FONSECA ADMITTED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS PROPOSAL WAS STILL PART OF THE COLOMBIAN POSITION. HE HAD NOT ATTENDED THE GRENADA MEETING AND WAS
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NOT FAMILIAR WITH FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO'S CURRENT VIEWS. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE POLCOUNSELOR CONTACT ALVARO BONILLA, FONSECA'S DEPUTY, WHO HAD ATTENDED THE GRENADA MEETING AND WAS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT LIEVANO'S POSITION ON THE MATTER.

3. FONSECA SAID THAT COLOMBIA WOULD BE REPRESENTED AT THE GENEVA MEETING BY THE COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR TO INTERNATIONAL

ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA, HECTOR CHARRY SAMPER. (FYI CHARRY, A FORMER LIBERAL PARTY CONGRESSMAN, IS WELL KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY. HE IS USUALLY AND CORRECTLY DESCRIBED AS "FEISTY". HE HAS BEEN FRIENDLY TO THE U.S. AND TO EMBASSY OFFICERS BUT IS SOMEWHAT PRICKLY AND REQUIRES CAREFUL HANDLING. DESPITE HIS PARTY AFFILIATION, HIS VIEWS ON MANY MATTERS ARE SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE. IT WOULD NOT BE OUT OF CHARACTER, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR CHARRY TO VIEW SYMPATHETICALLY THE REPRESSIVE METHODS USED BY THE SOUTHERN CONE COUNTRIES TO DEAL WITH INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMS. END FYI.)

4. POL COUNSELOR CONTACTED ALVARO BONILLA, FONSECA'S DEPUTY, ON JANUARY 24 AND ASKED HIM WHETHER COLOMBIA WOULD CONTINUE TO LINK HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE TRADING RELATIONSHIP CONCEPT AT FUTURE INTERNATIONAL FORA, SPECIFICALLY THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. BONILLA SAID THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS STILL VERY MUCH A PART OF COLOMBIA'S POLICY. HE SEEMED DOUBTFUL, HOWEVER, WHETHER COLOMBIA WOULD AGAIN MAKE SUCH A PROPOSAL AT GENEVA BUT DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, MEETINGS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BOGOTA00790
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780040-0762
Format: TEL
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780121/aaaaarnp.tel
Line Count: 81
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 164a09e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 15786
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3712713
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING, GENEVA, FEBRUARY 6 - MARCH 10
TAGS: SHUM, CO, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/164a09e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014